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ABSTRACT

This document provides the Arlington Education and Employment Program's (REEP) favorite techniques for teaching English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) grammar. The focus, levels, and materials needed are presented for each of the techniques as well as the steps to follow. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) (Author/VWL)

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REEP Grammar Favorites

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REEP GRAMMAR FAVORITES

Make grammar come alive with these activities and games. Enjoy!

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English Olympics
Bingo 2
Don't Blame Me!
Discovery Grammar 1
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Medicine Cabinet Picture Dictation
Tense Review Line Dialog
Watching Videos
Grammar Review Jeopardy
Picture Drawing
Word Order Game
Messenger Dictation

Word Order Scramble Submitted by: Trish McLaurin

Focus: simple sentence word order
Levels: 100-250
Materials: large index cards, tape or magnets

Steps:

- Elicit nouns and verbs from class and write them on index cards (or have the students write the words on the cards). The words could be related to a lifeskills topic. For example, health words could include various body parts, doctor, hurt, fell, have.
- Distribute cards to small groups and have students make sentences.
- Groups read their sentences to the class and/or post them on the blackboard with tape or magnets.

Or:

- Distribute cards with words with students have learned and practiced.
- Have students put the cards in the correct order.

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Don't Blame Me! Submitted by: Pat Thurston

Focus: simple past statements, negative statements, and questions

Levels: 400-450
Materials: Index cards. Make enough cards for half the class. Each card should have one question asking for explanation of inappropriate behavior. Example: "Why did you stick gum on my chair?"

Steps:

- Hand half of the class a question card.
- Follow the instructions for line dialog (see ESL Techniques).The answers to the questions should involve denying the inappropriate action and blaming someone else for it, using negative and then positive simple past tense statements. Example: "I didn't stick gum on your chair. Luis stuck gum on your chair."

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Write A Menu Submitted by: Trish McLaurin

Focus: abbreviated passive, past participle as adjective
Levels: 450 plus
Materials: assorted menus from area restaurants

Steps:

- Students review menus to identify abbreviated passive (roasted chicken, sauteed in butter)
- Groups then write their own menu using those and other words

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Discovery Grammar 1 Submitted by: Trish McLaurin

Focus: introducing any grammar structure that follows rules (examples: simple past questions, comparative sentences)
Level: 150 plus
Materials: none

Steps:

- Have students get in small groups.
- Write three or more examples of the grammar structure on the board.
- Have students look at the examples, deduce some rules about the formation of that structure, and write the rules.
- Circulate and help groups that may be having trouble.
- Groups share their rules and the teacher writes a few more examples.
- Follow-up: Do a practice activity putting the rules to work.

Possible examples the teacher could write on the board (comparatives):
-An apartment is cheaper than a house.
-New York is bigger than Washington, DC.
-Luis is taller than Nazmiye.

Possible rules the students could come up with:
-Write two things you want to compare.
-Between them, write the adjective + er.
-After the adjective, write THAN.

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Discovery Grammar 2 Submitted by: Melanie Siteki

Focus: introducing any grammatical structure that can be split into two or more different categories (much/many, pronunciation of simple past ED, T, or D; comparatives with more or -er)
Level: 150 plus
Materials: none

Steps:

- Teacher draws columns on the board corresponding to the number of categories the students need to learn (example: two columns for how much/how many, three for pronunciation of -ed)
- Teacher chooses vocabulary within the lifeskills unit and begins to write the word in the correct column (examples: apple--how many, coffee--how much)
- Pause and give students a chance to look at the categories and think about the pattern. At this point, do not let students shout out the rule (so everyone has a chance to "discover" it).
- Teacher says words one by one, class says what column it belongs in.
- After a good number of words have been categorized, ask if anyone can explain the rule (s) to the class.
- Practice and assess by having pairs of students draw the columns on their papers. Read out words and have pairs quietly write the word in the correct column. Afterwards, students volunteer to write the words on the board in the correct column.
- Practice more and apply the structure in context.

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Two-Picture Story Submitted by: Christine LeCloux

Focus: various grammar structures
Level: 250 plus
Materials: pictures of people from magazines

Steps:

- Teacher chooses two pictures and asks the class to think of a connection between them. Teacher writes the beginning of the story on the board, eliciting sentences in a recently studied verb tense.
- Hand pairs of students two pictures of people, face down.
- Tell students to find a connection between the two pictures and write a short story about them. In the story they must use a particular verb tense correctly 3-4 times.
- Students turn over their pictures and begin to write their story.

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Bingo 1 Submitted by: Jan Stoehr

Focus: Questions and Answers--good for listening comprehension with grammar structures
Level: adaptable to different levels
Materials: a bingo grid

Steps:

- Give students a bingo grid with short questions written at the bottom.
- Have students write the questions on the grid in random order.
- Read answers to the questions and have students put Xs on the corresponding questions.
- Variation: Dictate the questions (more difficult)
- Note: The questions and answers should relate to an objective in a particular lifeskills unit (Examples: personal ID questions, job interview questions, questions for the pharmacist).

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Medicine Cabinet Picture Dictation Submitted by: Melanie Siteki

Focus: prepositions of location
Level: 100 - 350
Materials: simple drawing of a medicine cabinet with a few medications on the shelves (copies for each pair of students), one copy of the drawing with other medications added on the shelves, overhead and markers.

Steps:

- Before class, prepare a simple picture of a medicine cabinet with *a few* medications on the shelves. Make a copy for each pair of students, and one transparency.
- On *one* copy for yourself, draw more medications on the shelves (choose medications the class has talked about).
- Hand pairs of students copies of the picture. Make sure they understand top shelf, bottom shelf, 1st shelf, 2nd shelf. Have students look at the transparency and tell you

where the medications are ("on the top shelf, next to the inhalor").
- Now begin telling them where the other medications are. Demonstrate once on the overhead that they are to listen carefully and draw the medication in the right place. Continue saying where medications are and have students continue putting medications in the right places on their papers.
- Finally, have students compare pictures and go over the location of each medication.
- Follow-up: Have students "call" each other in a medical emergency and direct each other to the medication they need in the medicine cabinet.

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Grammar Through Songs Submitted by: Susan Shome

Focus: any grammar structure found and repeated in a song
Level: 350-550 (depends on the song)
Materials: audio cassette player or CD player and audio cassette or CD with a song that features a grammar structure you have been practicing, and other materials such as a listening cloze exercise with the lyrics.

Steps:

- For any structure that you have practiced and want to reinforce, find a song where that structure is found (and ideally repeated many times in different ways).
- Have students listen for the given structure. At this point you can do a variety of activities, such as a listening cloze exercise, using the songs to reinforce the rhythm of English...

See *Using Songs to Teach Grammar in the ESL Classroom* for ideas about what songs to use for what grammar structures, and for some web links that take you to song lyrics. Also, Mary Smolenski recommends the lyrics of "I Hope You Dance" by Leeann Womack for practicing simple present tense verbs with a cloze exercise.

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Tense Review Line Dialog Submitted by: Karyn DeParis

Focus: Review of Verb Tenses
Level: 350-550
Materials: Index cards with questions in different tenses

Steps:

- Make up questions using a variety of verb tenses. Use any verb tenses studied so far. Make enough questions for half the class.
- Follow the instructions for line dialog (see ESL Techniques) and have students ask and answer the questions in the correct tense.

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Language Experience Approach Story Submitted by: Melanie Siteki

Focus: simple past tense
Level: any level, especially good for lower levels and literacy skills
Materials: blackboard or overhead projector

Steps:

- Go on a field trip together, have a guest visit your class, celebrate someone's birthday, or plan some other kind of special day.
- The next class period, discuss the special day. What happened? Have students tell you the story and help them if they get stuck. What did they see? Who did they go with? What Metro stop did they get off at? What did they eat? Did they take pictures? As they speak, write their story on the overhead, keeping the students' language as much as possible. The story should be a good length (about half a page), but not too long.
- Read the story to the students and have them read the story to you and to each other.
- Point out, underline, and drill the past tense verbs.
- Ask questions about the story or do written comprehension questions.
- Have students copy the entire story.
- Prepare a cloze worksheet with the same story, with the verbs missing or only the base form of the verbs.
- Have students add the verbs in the simple past tense.
- Follow-up: Have students mime the story while others narrate it in the past.
- Follow-up: Have students draw pictures of different "scenes" in the story and write the sentences under the picture. Compile the pages into a book for the class.

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Watching Videos Contributed by: John Kinney

Focus: present continuous and/or past tenses
Level: all levels
Materials: a video with lots of actions, VCR and TV

Steps:

- Record a television show, movie, commercial, or news clip.
- Have students say or write what is happening (present continuous) or what happened (past) as it happens on the screen.
- The teacher can also prepare questions in a given verb tense for the students to answer after watching the video.
- Well-chosen videos can be used to practice adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and a variety of other grammar points.

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Sentence Correction Contributed by: John Kinney

Focus: any grammar point(s) you want to focus on
Level: any level
Materials: board and chalk, 10 incorrect sentences

Steps:

- Divide the class into 2 groups.
- Write ten incorrect sentences on the board and number them 1-10.
- One group picks a sentence and tells the other group to correct it.
- If that group corrects the sentence, they receive a point.
- Then the team that just corrected a sentence picks one for the other group, and so on until they correct all the sentences.

Sample Incorrect Sentences for Health:
(for levels 150-300 with a focus on simple present tense in the Health Unit)

- My sister don't have health insurance.
- I no understand my doctor on the phone.
- My friend she doesn't take medicine.
- In my country, people drinks tea with lemon.
- Excuse me, my medical bill wrong.
- Where your daughter has a rash?
- What you recommending for a sore throat?
- My husband doesn't smokes.
- I'm exercising every day.
- I think I pregnant.
- I'm need an appointment today.

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Grammar Review Jeopardy Contributed by: John Kinney

Focus: any grammar point
Level: 150 and up
Materials: prepared questions using the grammar points you want to practice

Steps:

- Choose several grammar categories that you want to review (see example below).
- Prepare questions for each category (examples: students have to answer a question, change a word, correct a mistake...)
- Put students in groups
- Have the teams take turns sending a player to choose a category and answer a question.
- Groups get points for each question they answer correctly.

- 100 level questions are easier than 400 level questions.

Example:

Present Tense	Future Tense	Prepositions
100	100	100
200	200	200
300	300	300
400	400	400

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Charades

Focus: present continuous
Level: 100-250
Materials: index cards with verbs

Steps:

- Give each student an index card with a verb the class knows.
- Students take turns acting out their cards and the rest of the class says what they are doing
- Examples: She is making coffee. He is mailing a letter.

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Picture Drawing

Focus: prepositions of location
Level: 150-250
Material: paper and pens

Steps:

- Students find partners.
- One student draws a picture without showing their partner.
- One student describes his/her picture to partner, who tries to draw it based solely on the instructions. The student should be as specific as possible in describing where things are using prepositions of location (under the table, between two trees, next to the house).
- Students compare pictures to see how similar they are.

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English Olympics

Submitted by: Mary Smolenski

Focus: any grammar point you want to practice
Level: any level
Materials: prepared activities for each "event" of your choosing (see below)

Notes: This is especially fun if you do it while the Summer or Winter Olympics are going on. It also really helps to have a volunteer

Steps:

- Tell the class that they will be competing in a multi-event competition (like the Pentathalon).
- Divide the class into teams of 5-6 students (you can use the colors of the Olympic rings: red, blue, green, yellow, black as the team names).
- Students compete in a series of events, each practicing a different language skill.
- Ideas for events are operator, editing punctuation, verb tic tac toe, find the errors...
- For written activities, each team member gets a copy of the activity, but the team can only hand in one paper.
- Accuracy is more important than speed, but time is the tie breaker if necessary.
- Points are awarded for 1st (3 points), 2nd (2 points), and 3rd (1 point) teams. They receive gold, silver and bronze medals.

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Bingo 2 Submitted by: Mary Smolenski

Focus: irregular past tense verbs (but can be adapted to different grammar structures)
Level: 150-350
Materials: blank bingo cards and lists of irregular past tense verbs

Steps:

- Using a list of irregular verbs, groups of students or individual students fill in blank bingo sheets with irregular past tense verbs.
- The teacher or a student calls out verbs one by one in the present tense.
- Students must find the past tense on their sheets and mark it.
- Repeat until someone has a row of verbs marked--Bingo

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Word Order Game Submitted by: Mary Smolenski

Focus: word order
Level: 300 or higher
Materials: white and colored index cards. Use one color for nouns, one for verbs, one for adjectives, one for time (yesterday, in the morning, at night...), and one for

place (at school, in the parking lot...).

Steps:

- Divide the class into groups of 4-5 students.
- Give each group a handful of cards from each of the 5 categories.
- Working toegether, the groups create sentences with a minumum of 4-5 words. The students can use the nouns, verbs, etc. on their cards OR ANY noun/verb that they think of. One person in the group writes the sentences down. Prizes are given for the groups with the most sentences over the minimum number of words and for the longest sentence. Once they realize they can use any combination of nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc., they really create a lot of sentences and are surprised by how many sentences they have written.

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Messenger Dictation Submitted by: Karyn DeParis

Focus: verb tense review
Level: 300 and up
Materials: several copies of a list of sentences using a variety of verb tenses

Steps:

- Divide the class into groups of 4-5 students.
- Post the sentences in different places for each group.
- The teacher calls out a verb tense.
- One student from each group goes to the sentences and finds the one using the tense the teacher called out.
- The "messengers" go back to their groups and dictate the sentences.
- Have students compare their sentences with their peers'.
- Write the sentences on the board or overhead in the order you called them in, have students check their work, and explain anything that is unclear.

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Grammar Home

REEP Level Descriptions (To explain appropriate levels for REEP GRAMMAR Favorites):

100 (Low Beginning): Has minimal oral and literacy skills, if any. A native English speaker used to dealing with limited English proficient (LEP) speakers can rarely communicate with a person at this level, except through gestures.

Correlations:
Speaking/Listening: REEP Skill Level 1; NRS Beginning ESL Literacy; SPL 0, I, II; BEST Short Form Placement Scores 0-12
Writing: REEP Skill Level 1; NRS Beginning ESL Literacy; CASAS Level A
Reading: REEP Skill Level 1; CASAS Level A.

150 (Beginning): Can satisfy limited oral and literacy survival needs. A native speaker used to dealing with LEP speakers will have difficulty communicating with a person at this level.

Correlations:
Speaking/Listening: REEP Skill Level 1; NRS Beginning ESL; SPL I, II, III; BEST Short Form Placement Scores 0-18
Writing: REEP Rubric 1; REEP Skill Level 2; NRS Beginning ESL; CASAS Level A
Reading: REEP Skill Level 2; CASAS Level B.

200 (High Beginning Oral/Beginning Literacy): Can orally satisfy basic survival needs and very routine social demands, but has very limited literacy skills. A native speaker used to dealing with LEP speakers will have some difficulty communicating with a person at this level.

Correlations:
Speaking/Listening: REEP Skill Level 2; NRS Low Intermediate ESL; SPL III, IV; BEST Short Form Placement Scores 16-24
Writing: REEP Rubric 1; REEP Skill Level 2; NRS Beginning ESL; CASAS Level A.
Reading: REEP Skill Level 2; CASAS Level A.

250 (High Beginning): Can satisfy some oral and written survival needs and very routine social demands. A native speaker used to dealing with LEP speakers will have some difficulty communicating with a person at this level.

Correlations:
Speaking/Listening: REEP Skill Level 2; NRS Low Intermediate ESL; SPL III, IV; BEST Short Form Placement Scores 16-24
Writing: REEP Rubric 2; REEP Skill Level 3; NRS Beginning ESL; CASAS Level A.
Reading: REEP Skill Level 3; CASAS Level B.

300 (High Intermediate Oral/High Beginning Literacy): Can orally satisfy survival, social, and work demands, but has limited literacy skills. A native speaker **not** used to dealing with LEP speakers will have some difficulty communicating with a person at this level.

Correlations:
Speaking/Listening: REEP Skill Level 4; NRS High Intermediate ESL; SPL V, VI; BEST Short Form Placement Scores 27-33
Writing: REEP Rubric 2; REEP Skill Level 2; NRS Beginning ESL; CASAS Level A.
Reading: REEP Skill Level 2; CASAS Level B.

350 (Intermediate): Can satisfy most oral and literacy survival needs and some social and work demands. A native speaker used to dealing with LEP speakers will be able to communicate with a person at this level on familiar topics with little difficulty and effort.

Correlations:
Speaking/Listening: REEP Skill Level 3; NRS Low Intermediate ESL; SPL IV, V; BEST Short Form Placement Scores 23-29
Writing: REEP Rubric 3; REEP Skill Level 4; NRS Low Intermediate ESL; CASAS Level B.
Reading: REEP Skill Level 4; CASAS Level B.

400 (High Intermediate to Advanced Oral \ (Low) Intermediate Literacy): Can satisfy most oral survival, social, and work demands; can satisfy most literacy survival needs, but has difficulty with social and work demands. A native speaker not used to dealing with LEP speakers will be able to communicate with a person at this level on familiar topics, but with some difficulty and effort.

Correlations:
Speaking/Listening: REEP Skill Level 5; NRS Low Advanced ESL; SPL VI, VII; BEST Short Form Placement Scores 29+
Writing: REEP Rubric 3; REEP Skill Level 4; NRS Low Intermediate ESL; CASAS Level B.
Reading: REEP Skill Level 4: CASAS Level B.

450 (High Intermediate): Can satisfy most oral and literacy survival needs and a majority of social and work demands. A native speaker **not** used to dealing with LEP speakers will be able to communicate with a person at this level on familiar topics, but with some difficulty and effort.

Correlations:
Speaking/Listening: REEP Skill Level 5; NRS Low Advanced ESL; SPL VI, VII; BEST Short Form Placement Scores 29-33
Writing: REEP Rubric 4; REEP Skill Level 5; NRS High Intermediate ESL;

CASAS Level B.
Reading: REEP Skill Level 5; CASAS Level C.

550 (Advanced): Has effective oral and literacy skills in survival and social situations as well as familiar and unfamiliar work situations. A native speaker **not** used to dealing with LEP speakers can communicate with a person at this level on most topics.

Correlations:
Speaking/Listening: REEP Skill Level 6; NRS High Advanced ESL; SPL VI, VII; BEST Short Form Placement Scores 31-37
Writing: REEP Rubric 5; REEP Skill Level 6; NRS Low Advanced ESL; CASAS Level C.
Reading: REEP Skill Level 6; CASAS Level C.

EXIT: Has effective oral and literacy skills in survival, social, and work situations. A native English speaker not used to dealing with limited English speakers can communicate with a person at this level.

Correlations:
Speaking/Listening: SPL VIII+; BEST Short Form Placement Scores 38-40
Writing: REEP Rubric 6; NRS High Advanced ESL; CASAS Level D
Reading: CASAS Level D.

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